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E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: PGOV PREL GH

SUBJECT: FORMER MINISTER OF NATIONAL SECURITY UNDER HOUSE
ARREST

REF: ACCRA 78

¶1. On January 16, sources told us that elements of the Ghana Police and military surrounded former Minister of National Security Francis Poku's home, effectively placing him under house arrest. (NOTE: Poku was removed from his post as Minister on January 12 as reported reftel. END NOTE.)

Sources told us the GOG took this step because Poku had refused to answer questions from some GOG officials about his tenure as Minister of National Security. Poku was then given an ultimatum to appear at "Australian House" (GOG's official guest house) by 0900 on January 16 to "debrief" GOG officials. The house arrest was apparently imposed to encourage Poku to attend the meeting. However, Poku still refused and therefore was taken against his will to the Australian House to undergo questioning.

¶2. Sources report that Poku visited his office over the weekend and shredded documents and took some films from his office which now cannot be located. GOG officials are also concerned that Poku may have been using GOG resources for his personal benefit and wanted additional details from him. Sources report that Poku returned home later on January 16 under a police escort which will remain outside his residence until he departs for further "debriefing" on January 17.

¶3. COMMENT: News of Poku's detention spread quickly as media outlets learned of Poku's house arrest. It is unclear so far the purpose of the "debriefing" and why Poku refused to participate until coerced. If, as reported in reftel, Poku was doing things unbeknownst to President Kufuor, the "debriefing" could be an attempt by the GOG to learn of other activities he was carrying out while Minister that he failed to inform the President about. The GOG so far has remained largely silent on Poku's removal from office and subsequent actions saying only that he has been removed from his duties and must "debrief" the GOG on his tenure. END COMMENT.

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